

Supporting Ourselves

An outreach worker must develop and utilize strategies to maintain his or her own physical and mental health.

I. BURNOUT PREVENTION

There are numerous strategies that may help the outreach worker handle stress.

Knowledge

- Recognize those aspects of the profession that can contribute to excessive stress;
- Understand the difference between burnout and depression;
- Understand strategies for reducing burnout (such as job diversity, regular staff support meetings, and ongoing training).

Skills

- Be able to identify burnout;
- Be able to seek help from supervisors, coworkers, and outside support systems when stress and burnout begin to increase.

Attitudes

- Develop an open-mindedness to work on and eliminate stress;
- Create an atmosphere that promotes health.

II. RELAPSE PREVENTION

To prevent a return to substance abuse, the outreach worker must understand and identify early the warning signs of relapse.

Knowledge

- Understand the warning signs of relapse;
- Understand the disease of addiction;
- Understand available treatment programs.

Skills

- Be able to conduct a substance abuse intervention with a coworker;
- Be able to assess the most appropriate support group with which to work.

Attitudes

- Develop open-mindedness and empathy;
- Develop patience and perseverance.

